

Inside Seven

CALTRANS DISTRICT 7 EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 1999

ROBERT W. SASSAMAN NAMED NEW DISTRICT 7 DIRECTOR

Congratulations to veteran transportation engineer Robert W. Sassaman, Caltrans new District 7 Director. The news was officially announced October 19 by Caltrans Director, José Medina. Sassaman will head a district whose responsibilities include 27 freeways and state highways throughout Los Angeles and Ventura counties. Medina said, "Bob Sassaman brings to this assignment an experienced, steady hand to manage the complex transportation issues facing Los Angeles and Ventura counties. We are fortunate to have a person of his abilities lead District 7 into the new millennium."

"It's a real privilege to be asked by Director Medina to head the best Caltrans District," said Sassaman. "District 7 has always been looked to by other Districts as a source of innovative solutions in transportation." Sassaman said that one of the reasons he applied for the position was because he knew that he could count on the support of District 7 employees to assist him in providing the best planned, designed, constructed, maintained and operated transportation system for our customers in Los Angeles and Ventura counties. "District 7 always comes through in the tough situations, like earthquakes, floods, and fires; and major events, like the Olympics and the recent San Bernardino Freeway (I-10) 55-hour weekend closure," added Sassaman.

Senator Adam Schiff said, "I congratulate Bob on his appointment to District Director of Caltrans District 7 and look forward to continuing to work with him in serving the motorists, businesses and



Robert W. Sassaman

residents of our region in seeking to solve the issues that will face us in the new millennium. Bob has already proven himself to be a remarkably responsive leader in reacting to the needs of our communities, and in proposing solutions that will lessen traffic congestion and ensure our region continues to prosper."

Schiff also said that solving traffic congestion issues is vital to the day-to-day quality of life in Southern California and the continuing robust health of the economy. He added, "Under Bob Sassaman's leadership, the employees of Caltrans District 7 have done an outstanding job of responding to those regional transportation challenges."

Prior to his appointment as District Director, Sassaman served as Chief Deputy for four years. And in March of 1999, he stepped into the position of

heading the district when Tony Harris was named by Governor Gray Davis as Caltrans Chief Deputy Director in Sacramento. Prior to his tenure as Chief Deputy, Sassaman was Deputy District Director for Project Management at Caltrans District 8 in San Bernardino, a post he held since 1988. In that capacity, he was responsible for directing a professional engineering staff in the development, design and delivery of highway projects totaling in excess of \$100 million a year.

Sassaman was also a member of a team that helped develop the project management concept at Caltrans, and later helped implement the system in District 8. The district was the first one in the state to use "single hat" project managers to streamline the process of delivering transportation improvements. He also was a facilitator at the project management academies that taught the system to Caltrans supervisors. Among his other career highlights are supervising the design of the complex Simi Valley/San Diego Freeway Interchange (now named the Ronald Reagan Freeway - 118/405) in the San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles.

Sassaman was hired at Caltrans District 7 as a junior civil engineer in July of 1962. A few of the positions he held included: Design Project Engineer of the 118/405 Freeway Interchange; Resource Management Section Chief; Project Management Section Chief; Hydraulics Section Chief; Management Services Branch Chief; and Deputy District Director for Administration. He is registered as a Professional Engineer in

Safety Exhibit Wins Green Ribbon At Los Angeles County Fair!

The Caltrans highway workers safety exhibit at this summer's Los Angeles County Fair was so impressive that it won honors as the Most Outstanding Use of a Multiple Space Area. The exhibit was coordinated by Alan Calver, Safety Specialist. For their exceptional efforts, the Safety Office was presented with a prestigious Green Ribbon. Calver accepted the ribbon on behalf of the Safety Office.

Calver said, "The main goal of the safety exhibit is to make the public aware that Caltrans is not only orange trucks and machinery; Caltrans is people – fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers – not just equipment and signs."

All five regions of Maintenance were involved in the set-up and tear down of the exhibit, which took place at the fair in Pomona from September 9-26. In addition, three trucks were used to transport materials, and over 75 Maintenance and Safety personnel volunteers modified their schedules to work at the exhibit – employees who really wanted to be a part of the fair and looked forward to it. Calver said it is important to have Maintenance personnel at the exhibit so the public can talk to the actual workers who are the visible ones out there on the job. "We are there to establish good will and rapport with the public. And we were very successful at doing just that."

Mike Miles, Acting Maintenance Program Manager, viewed the display on September 22 and spoke with the folks working there. He said, "They were all very proud because they had just received the Green Ribbon. Great work on everyone's part who have been involved in this project."

This year Caltrans' space at the fair was increased by about 50% over last year. And this time the booth was enclosed, or something you could actually walk into, rather than just a walk-by. It was fabricated that way in order to attract people inside the exhibit. And it worked. Damaged attenuators (crash cushions) as well as interesting and dramatic photos depicting various projects and road-work were used to draw attention to the exhibit. In addition a memorial plaque listing the names of highway workers who were killed on the job was displayed in order to make the public aware of the realities of high-



Bob Dennis, right presents Alan Calver, left, with the Los Angeles County Fair's Green Ribbon for an outstanding highway workers safety exhibit.

way work. Thomas Ritter, a new employee of Graphic Services who helps out with photography duties, was recently brought into the District Office Building from Maintenance field work after a work-related accident left him badly injured. Now recovered, one of his duties was to help photograph some of the pictures of the Los Angeles County Fair. While getting ready to photograph the safety exhibit, he suddenly came face to face with the Caltrans Memorial Plaque. He said, "Here I was looking at all these names on this plaque of Caltrans workers killed on the job, and I realized that the last name on the plaque could have been mine." It was a very moving experience for Ritter, once again bringing to light the harsh realities of high-

way maintenance and construction work.

Once people were inside, they were most impressed and understanding of the dangers highway workers face every day. Sometimes 15-20 people at a time viewed the exhibit and took away informative safety brochures and other information pertinent to highway safety. In addition to safety material, over 10,000 Caltrans antenna balls were distributed, as well as litter bags and children's activity books. "Of the literally thousands of people we spoke with, hardly anyone had anything negative to say. Most everyone said how much they appreciate what we do out there on the road," said Calver.

Doug Failing, Division Chief of Design, visited the display one evening with his family. He said, "We all enjoyed the visit very much, and the Maintenance staff were doing a great job!"

Calver wishes to extend his thanks to all five regions of Maintenance who were there every step of the way; and to Equipment Shop 7 who helped fabricate displays and allowed Safety to build the exhibit at their field office. In addition, he extends his appreciation to Bob Dennis, Chief, Resources Management and to all of the Executive Office personnel for their support; as well as Duncan McIntosh and the Graphic Arts department for their assistance with displays, photos and other supplies.

Calver added, "We are out there working at the fair every year.



The Caltrans Memorial Plaque was displayed at the Los Angeles County Fair; a sobering reminder of the harsh realities of highway maintenance and construction work.

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Thanks, But No Tanks

While it may have been convenient for employees to “tank-up” their vehicles at the District Office Building, storing gasoline on the premises is now a thing of the past. From now on, gassing-up state vehicles will now have to be done at the gas station.

On Thursday, October 1, Richard Crawford, Hazardous Materials Manager, began directing a major effort to remove two



The half-buried tanks being attended to by specialized crews from Geocon, who are experienced in this type of delicate operation.

12,000-gallon fuel tanks located 14 feet below the District Office Building's loading dock area. The 13-year-old tanks were installed in 1986. As the Project Manager, Crawford supervised while large equipment and specialized machinery were brought in to facilitate the technical and specialized \$98,000 operation. Curious employees watched out of their windows near the loading dock and listened to the roaring of the machinery pounding the pavement as it was broken into thousands of pieces.

According to Crawford, the tanks were removed in order to convert to purchasing fuel via the credit card system.

Before crews could begin digging up the two 12-year-old



A special excavator used for breaking up pavement begins the task of unearthing two gasoline tanks located 14 feet below the surface of the District Office Building loading dock.

tanks, they were emptied and de-gassed of flammable vapors. This operation was accomplished by the extraction of the vapors via a specialized suction system. The tanks were also pressure-washed. A marine chemist was on site to inspect and certify that the tanks were clean before being unearthed. In addition, Los Angeles Fire Department personnel were present to verify that the numerous soil samples taken contained no contaminants. The project also involved repaving the loading dock area.

Co-managing the effort was Willie Perales, Hazardous Materials Manager. Perales explained that the many pieces of large equipment and machinery needed for the project included backhoes, loaders, dump trucks and a special excavator used for breaking up pavement. The equipment and fill material were located at a staging area at the Main Street parking lot until needed. Maneuvering the equipment, and shuttling 50 tons of gravel, base material and debris proved logistically complex in the small loading dock area. But crews worked long hours — from sun-up to 11 p.m. — in order to finish the project by Sunday, October 4 to have the loading dock opened Monday, thereby keeping disruptions to employees to a minimum.

Tommy Faubush, Caltrans Electrician, was on hand throughout the entire operation, lending his expertise and experience to the project, and also acted as liaison between Caltrans and the contractor, Geocon. Said Faubush, “I was there to help with the operation in any way that I could, including watching for damage to our water lines, telephone lines and electrical lines.”

Perales added, “This project was intense and logistically difficult; we had a big job to do in a small area. But we were able to overcome the difficulties because of the tremendous assistance from Tommy Faubush and the cooperation from Geocon. For the amount labor and hours that were put in, it really came together because of teamwork.”

Crawford concluded, “The job had some difficulties, but it really went very well because of the great team between Willie, Tommy, the contractor and myself. We all worked really well together to get the job done; and get the job done right.”

Thanks to all for a difficult job well done! •



After the tanks were uncovered, Willie Perales, left, and Richard Crawford, get ready to oversee crews who will be bringing up the still-buried tanks in the background.

22 Miles Of Carpool Lanes Open On Route 14

On October 7 during Rideshare Week, on Rideshare Thursday, on a windy day overlooking the newly opened High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes on Route 14 in Santa Clarita, representatives from Caltrans, local agencies and elected officials rejoiced at ceremony to celebrate the completion of the second phase of a five-phase corridor effort on the Antelope Valley Freeway. The project involved construction of 22 lane miles (11.5 miles northbound and 10.7 miles southbound) of HOV lanes stretching from Sand Canyon Road in Santa Clarita to Escondido Canyon Road in Acton. When the corridor is completed, rideshare commuters will have access to 72 lane miles of HOV lanes on Route 14 from I-5 to Avenue P-8 in Palmdale.

Commuters who share the ride will now be able to drive on 32 lane miles of continuous carpool lanes – from San Fernando Road (126) in Newhall to Escondido Canyon Road in Acton. The average daily traffic for these lanes is 15,000 vehicles per day.

On hand for the ceremony were: Assemblyman George Runner; Cameron Smythe, representing Senator William Knight; Bob Sassaman, District 7 Director; Michael Antonovich, Los Angeles County Supervisor; Mayor Frank Roberts, City of Palmdale; Mayor Joanne Darcy, City of Santa Clarita; Mayor James Ledford, City of Palmdale; Jim Sims, Director of Information Services, Southern California Association of Governments; and Al Rangel from Southern California Rideshare.

Sassaman said, "The significance of carpool lanes in this region is that it helps motorists who commute between the Antelope Valley, the Santa Clarita Valley, the San Fernando Valley and into Los Angeles. Route 14 HOV users have the potential to save 30-40 minutes per day by using both of these dedicated lanes during their daily commute." It is estimated that 2,400 commuters will use the carpool lanes during each peak hour of 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. southbound, and 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. northbound.

"This is great for everybody who commutes on this route," said



Left to right: Dawn Helou, Senior Transportation Engineering in charge of High Occupancy Vehicle Operations; Bob Sassaman, District Director; Mayor Frank Roberts, City of Palmdale; and Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael Antonovich in front of the newly opened Route 14 carpool lanes.

Dawn Helou, Senior Transportation Engineer in charge of HOV operations, callboxes and traffic monitoring. "Over the years, people would only call to complain about carpool lanes. Now they are calling to find out when a carpool lane will be available to them on their freeway."

The next step of the project will be phase three, which will extend the HOV lane an additional 22 miles from Escondido Canyon Road in Acton to Pearblossom Highway near Palmdale. Construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2000. Estimated completion is the fall of 2002.

Under phase four, 12 more HOV lane miles will be added from Pearblossom Highway to Avenue P-8 in Palmdale. Subject to construction funds availability, the estimated construction start date could be from the fall of 2002 to the fall of 2005; and completion could be from the fall 2004 to the fall of 2007. And phase five will extend 2.5 HOV lane miles from north of I-5 to San Fernando Road (126) in Newhall. Construction funding has been identified by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority for this phase, therefore it will be built before phase four. Construction on phase five is estimated to begin in the summer of 2000 and complete in the fall of 2001.

The addition of the new HOV lanes brings the total to 380 lane miles (total of both directions) of HOV lanes in Los Angeles and Ventura counties. Statewide, California now has 955 lane miles of HOV roadway available for ridesharers. Of interest is that 40% of California's HOV lanes are right here in Los Angeles County; 80% of the state's HOV lanes are in Southern California; and also California alone has over half of the HOV lanes in the entire United States!

Helou added, "The public is now realizing that simply adding more and more freeway lanes will not solve our current or future traffic problems. We now need to focus on moving people instead of vehicles if we are going to accommodate the inevitable future growth in the region." Helou notes that for most motorists, the formation of a simple carpool is the first and hardest step towards leaving the car at home and trying other forms of mass transportation. She added, "Studies have concluded that only those freeways that added HOV lanes had a significant increase in



Frank Latham, (second from right) Resident Engineer in charge of the Route 14 HOV project with his hardworking crew from the Mission Hills Construction field office, from left to right: Al Sadat, Hooshang Alishahi, Mahmud Ardabili, Dan Asmus, Frank Latham, and Kin Kwan.

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10 Is Enough!

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Traffic Design Delineator Dad Raises 10 Successful Children — Single-handedly!

Richard Byrd has always been a busy man. He has always been a very, very busy man. Since 1984, after being awarded sole custody of his kids after a divorce, he has single-handedly raised 10 successful children to be very proud of. The mild-mannered Byrd, a 17-year employee of Caltrans, is a proud dad and "Mr. Mom" all rolled into one.

Now all adults and ranging in ages from 24 to 38, the Byrd family children are all either in school, are graduates, are working, are busy being parents themselves, or are all or some of the above. They are: daughter Cherisse, 36, who is busy with a career in advertising; son Leroy, 33, a jack-of-all-trades working at the Martin Luther

spent two years studying in Egypt and speaks fluent Arabic.

When faced with the challenging task of raising ten children alone in 1984, Byrd readied himself for the many years to come. With children at the time ages 7 to 21, he inspired them to stay in school; and he helped those old enough to find jobs to help make ends meet at such places as McDonald's, Burger King and stores at various shopping centers and malls. "All the kids were willing to help out any way they could," said Byrd. And though working full-time as a Delineator at Caltrans, he found extra part-time work in movies and obtained jobs as a professional singer to help put food on the table. At one time

the way and advised me with all sorts of "Mr. Mom" situations. Up to this very day, they are the epitome of inspiration."

Byrd's 10 children and seven grandchildren bring endless pride and joy into his life. "I am so proud of all of them," he said. "My children have all become more successful than I could have hoped for." In addition, Byrd says one of the secrets to parenting is to just "be there." "Regardless of how many children someone has, as long as you are there as a parent, they will be there for you," he added.

Currently remarried to wife of four years, Willa, Byrd performs as a solo singing artist and sometimes fills in as a member of various singing groups. He



Left to right: Byrd's son Ishmael; a family friend (in front in black shirt); grandson Mustafa; proud father, Richard Byrd; son Abdul Sameei; son Ibn; grandson Stephan; and son Dukhan. (Son Leroy is not shown.)



Left to right back row: Byrd's daughter Rasheedah; daughter Aisha; wife Willa; daughter Asia; daughter Cherisse holding grandson Stephan; grandson Mustafa; and daughter, Saleemah. Front row: Godchild Danielle; and son Abdul Sameii.

King Center; son Ibn, the father of one of Byrd's seven grandchildren, was a loan officer and sadly passed away last year at the age of 30; daughter Saleemah, 29, a housewife and mother of four children; daughter, Asia, 27, an employee of the State of California and mother of one child; daughter Aisha, 26, who recently married a Naval accountant; son Dukhan, 28, who works in marketing and sales for Ross Stores; son Ishmael, 28, a marketing executive and part-time security guard, and the father of one child; daughter Rasheedah, 23, a dental assistant and student; and 24-year old Abdul Sameei, a junior-high foreign language teacher who

he was a member of the popular singing group, The Drifters, of "Up on the Roof" fame.

Byrd credits his vast support group of friends at Caltrans for their endless support throughout the years. He began his career as a Delineator in 1982 working in Project Development. In 1986 Byrd transferred to Traffic Design where he has worked ever since. He said, "With five daughters, being "Mr. Mom" has not been easy; it has definitely been a hard job for me. Being the dad was a lot easier. But I have the greatest support group of people here at Caltrans, and some very special female friends who helped me along

says he is always available for weddings, church affairs and all sorts of special occasions. In addition, he will be performing at the New Otani Hotel's Holiday Millennium Bash on December 21.

How did he, and how does he continue to do it all, and still maintain his calm and gentle demeanor? Byrd said, "I never had any doubt whatsoever about raising my children. I just knew I wanted to do it, and I was going to do it. And it is a great feeling. You never know what you can really do until you just do it."

Caltrans congratulates Richard Byrd and sends best wishes to the entire Byrd family for continued success. •



Equal Opportunity Corner

Disability Awareness Month

By Cathi McMahan, Equal Opportunity Coordinator

Last month was Disability Awareness Month. The purpose of the event was to celebrate awareness of persons with disabilities and their ability to participate in the workplace. District 7 joined in the celebration by having speakers give presentations on ways to overcome challenges associated with having a disability. The first speaker was from the Braille Institute and the second speaker was from the Guide Dogs of America Foundation.

In order to honor this important month, President Clinton proclaimed October 1999 as National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The following article is taken from President Clinton's proclamation.

THE WHITE HOUSE
OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH, 1999 BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA A PROCLAMATION

"As Americans, we define ourselves in many ways – not only by our families and communities, but also by our work; not only by who we are, but also by what we do for a living. Millions of Americans with disabilities, however, do not share that experience because their path to the world of work has been strewn with barriers. At a time when the unemployment rate in our Nation is at the lowest level in a generation—4.2 percent—a staggering 75 percent of Americans with disabilities remain unemployed, even though the vast majority of them want to work.

One of the greatest barriers to employment for people with disabilities is that, under current law, they often become ineligible for Medicaid or Medicare if they work. That is why I have challenged the Congress to pass the bipartisan Work Incentives Improvement Act. This proposed legislation would extend Medicare coverage for people with disabilities who return to work and improve access to health care through Medicaid. No American should ever be forced to choose between health care coverage and employment, and this legislation will help ensure that no one has to make that choice.

In addition to fully funding the Work Incentives, Improvement Act, my Administration's proposed budget includes a \$1,000 tax credit to help people with disabilities offset the cost of special transportation and other work-related expenses. We are also seeking to double our investment in such assistive technology as Braille translators, mobile phones, and voice recognition software that give disabled citizens the tools they need to make the transition to work. And in June of this year, I signed an Executive Order to expand employment opportunities for people with psychiatric disabilities and set an example for the private sector by ensuring that the Federal Government's hiring and promotion standards are the same for these workers as they are for people with mental retardation or severe physical disabilities.

Next year our Nation will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the 25th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act -- the two landmark pieces of legislation that transformed our country's disability policy and set a standard for other nations around the world. However, putting an end to negative attitudes and shattering destructive stereotypes will require the concerted efforts of all sectors of society. Until we integrate Americans with disabilities as full participants in our social fabric, we will never reach our employment goals.

This year, in addition to rededicating ourselves to breaking down employment barriers, we will highlight the achievements of people with disabilities in areas such as journalism, entertainment and the arts. People like journalist John Hockenberry prove that a wheelchair need not be an obstacle to traveling the world to report breaking news. Artists like

blind sculptor Michael Naranjo and deaf painter Alex Wilhite illustrate that having a disability can be the vehicle for advancing the arts in novel ways. Performers like Laurie Rubin, a classically trained vocalist, show us that blindness need not prevent one from taking the great stage of the opera.

To recognize the enormous potential of individuals with disabilities and to encourage all Americans to work toward their full integration into the workforce, Congress by joint resolution approved August 11, 1945, as amended (36 U.S.C. 121), has designated October of each year as "National Disability Employment Awareness Month."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 1999 as National Disability Employment Awareness Month. I call upon Government officials, educators, labor leaders, employers and the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities that reaffirm our determination to fulfill both the letter and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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A representative from the Guide Dogs of America visited District 7 during Disability Awareness Month. Left to right: Seyed (Amir) Torabzadeh, Disability Advisory Coordinator; Gale Richardson from the Guide Dogs of America Foundation with his seeing eye dog, Founder; and Irene Coyazo, Chief, Equal Opportunity and Governmental Affairs offices.



Left to right: Clevon Govan, Diane Kane, Ron Kosinski and Gary Iverson proudly display their "Striving for Excellence Team Awards" from the Federal Highway Administration.

Environmental Planners Receive Team Awards

A hard-working team of Environmental Planning employees were honored recently when they each received a "Striving for Excellence Team Award" from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for their work on the Route 710 gap closure project. Honored were Ron Kosinski, Chief; Clevon Govan, Senior Environmental Planner; Gary Iverson, Associate Environmental Planner; and Diane Kane, Associate Environmental Planner. The awards were presented by Glen Clinton from the FHWA.

The complex project involved long hours and weekends working on preliminary environmental work including the Record of Decision (ROD), and developing mitigation measures for cultural resources work.

Caltrans is working with other local agencies to improve local streets and roads in the area of the 710 gap closure



COMMUTER ALERT! This photo shows the traffic message that Fairplex ran on their electronic sign to warn motorists about the 55-hour closure of the San Bernardino Freeway. The Pomona Valley Mining Company Restaurant displayed a similar message on their electronic signboard. Our corporate partners really helped us get the message out! Caltrans presented Fairplex, Pomona Valley Mining Company, the Auto Club and the California Trucking Association with Certificates of Appreciation during a press conference held on 10/15/99.

project to help keep traffic moving in the area, while waiting for the freeway extension to be approved. Kosinski said, "We have made good progress, especially on interim traffic measures, as part of one of the requirements of the ROD."

Kosinski added, "It was great to see people from the FHWA and Caltrans working together for common goals. And I would like to thank Clevon Govan, Gary Iverson and Diane Kane for their commitment, dedication and long hours devoted to this challenging project."

Thank you and congratulations to Environmental Planning! •

Quote of the Month

"Think enthusiastically about everything, especially your work."

- Norman Vincent Peale

Route 14

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the total number of carpools, while the freeways without HOV lanes experienced a steady or declining number of carpools."

Sassaman also said, "Now that the era of major freeway building is over, ridesharing is one of California's best hopes for providing mobility in our growing region, along with using mass transit, such as buses, rail and trains. Everyone is encouraged to try carpooling!"

Sassaman then recognized Frank Latham, Resident Engineer on the project, and his hard-working crews from the Mission Hills Construction field office; Senior Construction Engineer, Hillel Amos; and FCI Constructors, the contractor on this \$32 million project. He then thanked the community and motorists in the region for their patience and understanding during the project. Crews faced some real challenges, especially at night when temperatures fell below 50 degrees, which affected pavement striping. In addition, the project had the El Niño rainstorms to contend with. Sassaman added, "With everyone's help the project really came together." •



Left to right: Bob Dennis, Bob Sassaman and James De Castro, display the District's 25th Rideshare Diamond Award for a 25-year commitment to ridesharing.

District 7 Wins Rideshare Honors!

Caltrans District 7 was proud to be among two dozen Southern California businesses and individuals honored at the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAGs') 25th Anniversary Rideshare Diamond Awards ceremony for Caltrans' commitment to ridesharing. The special ceremony was held as a kickoff event for Rideshare Week which was held October 4-8.

The Los Angeles Central Library was the site for the September 30 ceremony, where Bob Dennis, Chief, Resource Management accepted the award, and where Caltrans was applauded for establishing the nation's largest network of car pool lanes, which inspires commuters to save time and money by ridesharing. What's more, District 7 was praised for its own internal, successful Rideshare Program. The District was also commended for their cooperation with other local agencies to facilitate expedient travel. And the Transportation Management Center (TMC) was lauded for its efforts in keeping the flow of traffic moving in Los Angeles as well.

Dennis said, "I was privileged to accept the 25th Anniversary Rideshare Diamond Award on behalf of District 7. This award

commemorates the fact that Caltrans has been a leader in the Rideshare Program for the entire 25 year-life of the formal program." According to Dennis, literally thousands of workers, in the district office and in the field, have participated in these efforts, not just as a program builder but as active rideshare participants. He added, "It was of particular significance to receive this award because the recognition came from our day-to-day partners in transportation, including SCAG, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and the Ventura County Transportation Commission. Congratulations to District 7!"

James DeCastro, District 7's Employee Transportation Coordinator, said, "We are extremely pleased that we have achieved this honor. And it would not have been possible without the cooperation and participation of all employees who share the ride!" •

Rideshare Fair Draws Hundreds

District 7's participation in this year's Rideshare Week took place October 5, as an army of employees crowded the cafeteria to attend the Rideshare Fair and collect important information pertinent to mass commuting options; regional transit program subsidies; state-offered subsidies; state-sponsored carpools and vanpools; and telecommuting. Also popular were the free doughnuts and other giveaways.

Rideshare Week is a yearly, statewide campaign sponsored by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) that encourages commuters to share the ride to work. It took place this year during the week of October 4-8. According to *Crossroads*, a publication by Southern California Rideshare, a service of SCAG, "Traffic congestion in Southern California is growing by about 3% a year; someone has to do something about

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A crowd gathers in the cafeteria to collect valuable rideshare information.

Maintenance Convoy Makes Impressive Display At Safety Fair

"Be Smart – Be Safe," was the theme of a safety fair at the Ribét (pronounced ribbay) Academy College Preparatory School in Los Angeles, where a convoy of Maintenance equipment and personnel put on an impressive display for children's safety. The Academy, located near the 2, 5, 10 and 134 freeways at 2911 San Fernando Road, is a 10-acre, non-denominational, private school which actively prepares students, grades pre-kindergarten through high school, for the rigors of higher education. Included at the Caltrans booth were various large Maintenance trucks and equipment; safety brochures and material; children's activity books and crayons; kid-sized hard hats and orange vests; antenna balls; and more. Additional volunteers were also there to lend a hand.

Demonstrations, product booths and displays relating to child safety were available for the day-long event. In addition, a widely acclaimed two-hour parent presentation by "Kid Safe" was offered. Along with the Caltrans display the campus-wide fair featured: fingerprinting booths; a safety puppet show; self-defense demonstrations; CPR demonstrations; fire department displays; police department displays; balloon animals; photo identifications;



Donning Caltrans children's hard hats, kids and their parents at the Ribét Academy's Safety Fair pose in front of the many Caltrans volunteers and Maintenance equipment.

national child safety kits; a raffle; and Caltrans balloons too!

Shay Banduk, South Region Engineer, Office of Maintenance Support, was the coordinator on this worthwhile project. Scores of children and their families from the school, and from Caltrans as well, gath-

ered up vitally important safety information, and had a day of fun dressing up their children like Maintenance Workers. Of particular interest to the students and Caltrans kids alike was getting to see Caltrans trucks and equipment up close with the assistance of Maintenance personnel. Banduk said, "It was very rewarding being able to once again take the opportunity to promote Caltrans' operations and safety practices among the community. It was especially gratifying seeing the children having so much fun around our roadway maintenance equipment with their junior hard hats and orange vests. I attribute the success of the fair to the strong team effort made by all the people who helped organize our display. My special thanks to Nate Cradle, Kevin Sciotto, Glenn Mellinger, Chuck Webster and John Sturgis from Maintenance; Linda Caldwell from Safety; Margie Tiritilli, Jeanne Bonfilio and Joe Brazile from Media Relations/Public Affairs; and Steve Devorkin, photographer from Graphic Arts."

All in all, an informative, educational and fun day was had by all. Thanks to Shay Banduk, all the Maintenance personnel and other volunteers for such an impressive showing at the Ribét Academy Safety Fair! •



Visitors to the Caltrans safety booth at the Ribét Academy Safety Fair treat their children to kid-sized orange vests and hard hats, as well as picking up valuable safety material.

Meet The Press

By Erika Gallo, Student Assistant, Media Relations/Public Affairs

The highly acclaimed *Inside Seven* newsletter has undergone a major facelift. It recently adopted a new editor and new graphic artist. Last April, Jeanne Bonfilio, Assistant Public Information Officer for Media Relations/Public Affairs; and Monica Murillo, Senior Graphic Artist for the Graphic Services Department, redesigned and revamped the monthly District 7 publication. Additions include new columns, such as the Employee Spotlight, where an employee with an unusual, interesting or uplifting story is featured; and Quality Corner, a column dedicated to the Quality Efforts in the District. With the talents of Murillo, Bonfilio has transformed the *Inside Seven* into an artistic and informative must-read about Caltrans, its projects and employees.

In addition to editing articles submitted by staff writers and others, Bonfilio writes most of the articles herself. "Becoming editor has been a dream-come-true for me," she said. "Because I worked as an assistant editor in my past employment, I felt ready, willing and able to take on this interesting and challenging role. And I

have met so many wonderful people in the process."

Before transferring to Media Relations/Public Affairs in May, 1998, Bonfilio worked for three years in Construction and seven years in Right of Way. But, she says, her many years of work in the field of media relations and public affairs at two local hospitals, (the Hospital of the Good Samaritan in Los Angeles, and Saint Joseph Medical Center in Burbank) kept calling. And when a test was offered for Assistant Public Information Officer, she became eligible for the position. In addition to her past experience in writing and editing, she studied journalism and public affairs at UCLA and Glendale Community College. Bonfilio added, "The teamwork with Monica is the reason for the success of the newsletter. It has really been a joint effort."

Margie Tiritilli, Chief, Media Affairs/Public Relations, said, "Jeanne has done a super job as editor of *Inside Seven*. She cares deeply about the Caltrans staff and it shows in her articles which appear monthly without her byline. Jeanne and Monica are two real dynamos who have both brought a lot of creativity to the newsletter with such talent."

Murillo has been with Caltrans for 11 years, but is a fairly new employee to

District 7; she was hired one year ago. Prior to District 7, she worked in the Graphic Arts departments for Districts 4 and 12. Some of the work she does includes logo designs, exhibit signs, photography and video editing. And she agrees that *Inside Seven* has taken on a whole new look and feel. She said, "In the year that I've been here, I've had more challenging projects, such as the Transportation Management Center (TMC) brochure and the redesign of the *Inside 7*. And I have more freedom to be creative."

Duncan McIntosh, Graphic Services Supervisor, said that hiring Monica was an easy decision. He said, "Monica has been able to take on new and challenging projects under tight deadlines. *Inside Seven* is just one of her many successful accomplishments. I know when Monica gets an assignment, she will take responsibility for the project and complete it, doing whatever it takes. She makes my job easier, and I appreciate that." Murillo is a graduate of California Polytechnic University and also studied at the Parsons School of Design in Paris, France.

Inside Seven has received countless compliments, telephone calls, emails and letters praising the new look, format and professional appearance of the re-styled newsletter. José Medina, Caltrans Director, is among those who have praised the excellent publication. Retirees were recently added to a mailing list and receive the monthly issues. They are also among those who have recognized the hard work, and have shared their positive messages with Bonfilio. "We strive to publish a professional and informative newsletter and hope to continue to earn all the nice compliments," she added. "And I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for all of their nice words and positive comments."

Those interested in reading the latest "scoop" about the District can now access the *Inside Seven* newsletter at their convenience on the Internet at the District 7 web page at www.dot.ca.gov/dist07. Bonfilio welcomes any comments or suggestions and can be reached via email or at extension 7-3630. •



Monica Murrillo, left and Jeanne Bonfilio, right, discuss the layout and content of an upcoming issue of the acclaimed *Inside Seven* newsletter.

County Fair

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It is the main safety promotion we do for workers safety. No other district promotes workers safety at county fairs like District 7 does. And we want to have a bigger and better display next year!"

Over 1.5 million people attended this year. Everyone is encouraged to come out to the Los Angeles County Fair next year with the entire family and see the award-winning Caltrans exhibit, visit with the dedicated Maintenance and Safety workers and make new friends.

Congratulations and appreciation to all involved in this exceptional presentation, and for winning the Green Ribbon. Thank you for making us all very proud! •



One section of the award-winning Caltrans Highway Workers Safety Exhibit at the Los Angeles County Fair displayed the recent detour map of the San Bernardino Freeway (I-10) extended weekend closure; and interesting project photos.

Rideshare Fair

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it...and, that someone could be you."

The Caltrans event provided valuable information on cost-saving options for transportation to and from work. In addition, employees presently commuting alone in their private vehicle and who pledged to rideshare at least one day during Rideshare Week, became eligible to join in SCAG's "Take the Free Way to Paradise" drawing. Those eligible qualified to win prizes like vacations, an electric bicycle and more.

James De Castro, Employee Transportation Coordinator, was very pleased with the substantial turnout. He said, "Hundreds of people attended the fair. It was a very successful event and we were able to get exposure about ridesharing to our employees. The more visible the program, the more people who will consider ridesharing." De Castro also said that Caltrans has been very successful in getting more people to share the ride. Over the past three years, ridesharing has increased among employees. According to the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), each vehicle should have 1.75 persons on board to comply with the clean air standards. In 1997, a Caltrans survey showed 1.65 persons. In 1998, it was up to 1.69. This year, noted De Castro, Caltrans has not only met, but surpassed the expected

standards by showing that an average ridership of 1.88 persons are on board as they commute to work. De Castro added, "All of the efforts we have put into encouraging people to share the ride have paid off."

Bob Dennis, Chief, Resource Management agrees that the Rideshare Fair was successful and beneficial. He said, "The success of the event was, in large part, because of the outstanding efforts James De Castro put into it to ensure that it was a success. And more significantly, because District 7 employees recognize the overall economic and environmental benefits to ridesharing." Dennis also mentioned that in early September District 7 received a letter from Southern California Rideshare commending De Castro for his efforts. Dennis added, "James serves as a role model for other Employee Transportation Coordinators; and District 7 serves as a role model for other large employers in supporting the Rideshare Program."

De Castro added, "Ridesharing benefits employees because of the low cost, faster commute times and provides for a less stressful ride to work." Another added bonus is the availability of carpool lanes in District 7. California leads

the way in construction of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes with forty percent of the state's HOV lanes right here in Los Angeles County! And ridesharing can help to clean the air. "Carpooling even once a week can make a big difference," according to *Crossroads*.

Caltrans extends its appreciation to James De Castro for his superb efforts in the Rideshare Fair and the Caltrans District 7 Rideshare Program; and to all employees who attended the event. And a very special "thank you" to all those carpoolers and vanpoolers, bus riders and train riders who share the ride. Dennis concluded, "The success of the Rideshare Fair and our outstanding Rideshare Program points out that District 7 continues to be a transportation leader." •



A certificate from the South Coast Air Quality Management District showing Caltrans has surpassed expected standards of achieving an average vehicle ridership of 1.88 for the year 1999.

Quality Corner

Caltrans THE LEADER IN QUALITY TRANSPORTATION

By Sheik Moinuddin, Senior Transportation Engineer,
Traffic Investigations

According to Caltrans' mission statement, "Caltrans promotes economic vitality and enhances the quality of life for the people of California by providing for the mobility of people, goods, services and information." An essential part of that commitment is an unwavering dedication to finding ways to do things better, faster, cheaper and safer. In support of that goal, Caltrans has embraced the principles of Quality.

Quality is defined as "continuous improvement actions to meet customers' needs and expectations," and the Division of Operations under the leadership of Frank Quon has established a new milestone on Quality, not just for District 7, but for the entire organization. According to him, "Quality is not just a philosophy that can be achieved only through certain formalized efforts; rather it is a teamwork involving the Division as a whole. It is everyone's responsibility to improve the process and the quality of work. If everyone took ownership and responsibility for their portion, quality is then automatically built into the products and services that we deliver."

Quon wrote in the *Operations Newsletter* (1998), "We must continue to focus on improving our products as well as our services to our customers and to ourselves." His statement is profoundly evident in what this Division has accomplished in the last fiscal year (FY 98/99). Work Production Tracking System (WorPro) has been rolled out in the Office of Traffic Investigations to have a centralized information system capable of providing program and functional managers with the means of monitoring workload and workload production counts for the various programs. The Office of ITS Development has implemented one of the largest Advanced Transportation Management Systems (ATMS) in the country. This system implementation included a major upgrade of the Transportation Management Center (TMC). This center was built with the basic idea of managing freeway traffic to achieve the goal of reducing traveler commuting times, maximizing roadway capacity, and in the end, providing a safer traveling medium for the general public. The Office of Traffic Management is in the process of publishing traffic volume data on the Caltrans District 7 Intranet website to provide better service to our customers. The Office of TMC Support had the lead on the Quality "Traffic Operations System (TOS) Integration Management team," which was formed to improve the level of service during the integration of construction projects involving fiberoptic communications. This multidivisional team (Operations, Construction and Maintenance) established procedures to integrate these construction projects with no downtime to the District 7 TMC. The Office of Traffic Design created a Quality team to improve the quality and constructability of traffic design/electrical design projects. The goal was to reduce construction change orders to



Left to right: Roy Pool, Juan Nunez, Mike Evans and Bob Sassaman, as Nunez is presented with his First Place Award.

Juan Nunez, Champion Of The Tree Jamboree

The winner of the 1999 First Place Award for the Tree Jamboree throw line event for Southern California was Juan Nunez, a talented Tree Trimmer with over 10 years experience from Maintenance, East Region. Roy Pool, Region Manager, recently presented the special plaque to Nunez. Also on hand for the presentation were Bob Sassaman, District Director and Mike Evans, Acting Division Chief, Maintenance. What is so significant is that this is the second year in a row that Nunez has received this admirable award.

The Tree Jamboree is to Tree Trimmers as what the Equipment Rodeo is to Maintenance Workers. It is a friendly competition between employees to demonstrate excellence and develop skills. The Jamboree is broken down into two groups: Northern California and Southern California. Pool said, "I am proud to say that Juan Nunez from my region won this event for Southern California."

Approximately 15 competitors came together at Lake Casitas State Park in Ventura to compete in each of four categories: roping for accuracy; chain saw; rope climb and throw lines. All categories require tremendous skill and accuracy. Each competitor performs special skills in each category and are then timed. Ray Parker, Tree Maintenance Supervisor, said, "Juan is a hard and dedicated worker. I am really impressed that he won this event two years straight. We are all really proud that he won the first place award and that we are all part of the hard working East Region Maintenance crews." Employees from other districts won in each of the other categories.

Nunez said, "I really liked the competition and I always try my best. It was a pretty tough competition and there were a lot of competent guys to compete with. I am very proud to have won this award twice."

Congratulations, Juan Nunez, on a most impressive accomplishment! •



Jim Suyemasa, left, receives congratulations from Frank Quon, District Division Chief, Operations, on his well-deserved award.

Jim Suyemasa: A Superior Award For A Superior Employee

On September 30, Jim Suyemasa, a 42-year veteran of Caltrans and a valued and highly respected employee, received a well-deserved Sustained Superior Accomplishment Award. For the past 12 years, Suyemasa has been assigned to the Planned Lane Closure Unit in the Office of Traffic Management; recently called the Office of the District Traffic Manager within the Division of Operations. His responsibilities include performing traffic analysis and developing transportation management plans to minimize delays and inconveniences to the motoring public as a result of lane closures on the highway system.

Ali Bamshad, Senior Transportation Engineer, said, "Jimmy's dedication and willingness to go the extra mile has made him an expert in the field of traffic management." Since the inception of the Office of the District Traffic Manager on July 1, 1998, Suyemasa has reviewed over 24,000 planned lane closure requests and resolved about 300 lane closure conflicts resulting in an estimated savings of \$940,000 per month to Caltrans' customers, explained Bamshad.

As a member of the District's Traffic Management Team, Suyemasa responds to about 50 planned and unplanned incidents per year during normal work hours. In addition, he responds to about 120 incidents outside of his normal work hours, including weekends. Bamshad added, "Many of these after-hours responses on his own time because of his concern for public safety and a desire to present a positive image of Caltrans by improving traffic flow through construction and maintenance work zones. Jimmy has 'raised the bar' in establishing an exceptional standard of dedication and quality of service in this organization."

Always willing to share his knowledge and experience with his co-workers, Suyemasa strives to provide a safer environment for motorists and highway workers. His friendliness and professionalism are appreciated by all who are fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to work with him. On numerous occasions and during all hours of the day, Suyemasa has been called upon to resolve real-time traffic-related issues as a result of unplanned events.

Suyemasa said, "It makes me very happy to receive this award. I feel it belongs to the whole Traffic Management Team; and I accept it on their behalf as well." In the past 13 years, he says he has worked with a lot of people from different branches, especially from the Maintenance, Construction and Permit offices. "I have dealt with many employees and received a lot of cooperation. It has been a pleasure working with them, and it has been a wonderful experience." As anyone who has the pleasure to work with Jim Suyemasa will agree: the pleasure has been all theirs. Congratulations, Jim! •

Quality

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5% and standardize electrical design work in the district to enhance consistency and quality.

Unfortunately, we do not have the ability to cover all of the Division's Quality efforts in this article. However, through this quality commitment, the Division was fortunate to have been recognized for numerous Quality awards: 1998 FHWA Administrator's Safety Award for the Long Beach Roundabout (Traffic Investigations); 1998 Caltrans Statewide Quality Award for Quality Electrical Design—Pathfinder Level (Traffic Design), and Malfunction Ramp Metering Quality Team—Explorer Level (Traffic Management, TMC Support and Maintenance), to name a few. Many certificates/letters of appreciation were also received from the local government and elected officials, as well as private citizens, for exemplary services to them, which is in line with our Department's mission.

The Division of Operations has instituted even more aggressive Quality programs for this fiscal year (FY 99/00). The Office of Traffic Investigations has taken the lead on two Quality projects: "Capital Outlay Support (COS) One Stop Shop" to establish better coordination of COS-related work and "Electronic Tracking System for Sign Installation Orders" to establish an electronic database, available on the Intranet for signs processed since 1989. The Office of Traffic Management has initiated a project to improve the servicing of our ramp metering systems. The Office of the District Traffic Manager has initiated a program to better coordinate with the Construction Zone Enhanced Enforcement Program (COZEEP) and Maintenance Zone Enhanced Enforcement Program (MAZEEP) programs to improve the safety of the general motorists as well as our maintenance and construction workers.

Last fiscal year (FY 98/99) was a successful year for the Quality programs for this Division and we are looking forward to an even better year (FY 99/00). As Mr. Quon concluded, "We are committed to continuous improvement and we will continue to raise the bar." •

Dear Mr. Sassaman:

I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Caltrans employees who assisted the U. S. Forest Service during the Bridge Fire incident in San Gabriel Canyon. In particular, I would like to express my thanks to Theresa Drum for her outstanding work the first night of the fire. Theresa worked all night, often in hazardous fire situations, to keep Highway 39 open and free of rocks and debris. She braved flames and fire, which was actively burning right down to the road to ensure that fire-fighters and necessary equipment were able to access the fire area. She diligently worked all through the night maintaining the road. In addition, special thanks go to Bill Larson, Chuck Deming, Wayne Morera and Klaus Verhelst. They each worked especially hard to ensure that the Highway was accessible.

My staff has shared with me that your Highway 39 Foothill Mountain Crew has always done an exceptional job in road maintenance, and has always worked well with us. I had the opportunity to witness this first-hand, and this was during one of the most stressful situations I can imagine.

Again, please convey my sincere thanks to this crew. They could not have done a better job!

Sincerely,
Raina Marie Fulton
District Ranger
United States Department of Agriculture,
Forest Service
San Gabriel River Ranger District

Dear Caltrans:

I am receiving the *Inside Seven* newsletter and thoroughly enjoy reading through it. I don't always recognize the names, however it is good to see what is going on in the District.

My wife and I continue to enjoy life here in the Fun City, Las Vegas. We have many new friends and have good times with them going to lunch, dinner, and of course doing some gambling. We were very lucky when we chose our home – our neighbors are exceptional and the location has been just perfect. We are in a non-flood area on the west side and up about 800 feet higher than the strip. It is actually a



few degrees cooler here than down below. Our mountains to the west can get quite a bit of snow on them during the winter, and we've had a few dustings here too.

Thank you for seeing that we receive *Inside Seven*!

Best Wishes,
Tom Tayrien, P.E., Caltrans Retiree

Mr. Roy Pool
Region Manager, Maintenance East Region

Dear Mr. Pool:

On September 9, 1999, our officers assisted the Azusa Police Department with the pursuit of a bank robbery suspect, which eventually terminated on the westbound Pasadena Freeway (210) Freeway at Lake Avenue in the city of Pasadena. Unfortunately, the incident escalated into the officer-involved shooting that necessitated the closure of all westbound 210 lanes during rush hour traffic. Needless to say, this closure had a monumental impact on traffic both on the freeway and on city streets.

We requested assistance from your agency to assist us with traffic management, and numerous members of your department responded to assist. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of them for a job well done. Your personnel coordinated the freeway closure and provided traffic control to assist the thousands of motorists who were inconvenienced because of this incident. I would especially like to thank Mr. Skead Patton for his involvement and assistance. Please convey to all of them my heartfelt appreciation.

Sincerely,
Captain William C. Whiteside
Altadena Area Commander
California Highway Patrol

Dear Caltrans:

We sincerely appreciate the opportuni-

ty of doing business with Caltrans and want to express our gratitude for the efforts of Richard Crawford, Willie Perales and Tommy Faubush during the underground storage tank removal work we recently completed at the District 7 office facility in Los Angeles. The time and space constraints of this project required complete cooperation between Geocon and Caltrans, and we could not have completed the work during the time available without the assistance we received from these gentlemen. Several unanticipated circumstances arose during the project and during each of those circumstances, Richard, Willie and Tommy were always there to lend a hand, assist with a solution and/or actually implement a solution themselves.

Our work is always made so much easier when we have the level of cooperation and assistance these gentlemen demonstrated during this project. You should be proud to have Tommy, Richard and Willie on your team. We look forward to continuing a mutually beneficial relationship with Caltrans.

Sincerely,
Brian W. Stafford, Jr., P.E.
Vice President
Geocon Environmental Consultants, Inc.

Mr. Bob Dennis, Chief
Resources Management

Dear Mr. Dennis:

Over the past ten years I have worked with Caltrans to assist with rideshare information, vanpooling and the calculations for the Trip Reduction Plan required by the Air Quality Management District (AQMD).

I would like to take a moment to recognize James De Castro, your present Employee Transportation Coordinator.

The past few years I have worked with James and spoken with him about the program for ridesharing at Caltrans. Never have I had the opportunity to work with an individual who so well understands the concept of the position and the long-term goal for the benefit of Caltrans. James has proven that Caltrans can have a successful and meaningful program along with the effort that is needed to meet the

goal required by the AQMD.

Since James has been the transportation contact person, I have had the enjoyment of watching the program grow as is reflected in the reports our company generates for Caltrans. James deserves recognition for his administration and improvement shown in your program. Besides, he is one of the most professional and pleasant people I have had the pleasure to know.

My appreciation and acknowledgement to James for the work he has accomplished.

Sincerely,
Jeannie Keene
Account Executive
Southern California Rideshare
Southern California Association of
Governments



On November 4 and 5, Caltrans Director José Medina will be visiting District 7. On November 4 he will be at the District Office Building for a tour and to meet and greet employees as he does an informal walk-through. On November 5, he will visit Ventura County for a town-hall type-meeting with the community, and will also be meeting elected officials.

Caltrans motorcycle riders and friends are forming a motorcycle caravan to the 16th Annual Love Ride, the largest motorcycle fund-raising event in the world! All proceeds benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association and the Los Angeles Times Reading Literacy Project. The group will leave at 7 a.m. on November 14 from the Caltrans District Office Building visitors parking lot at 120 South Spring Street, Los Angeles. They will reach Glendale Harley Davison at 7:30 a.m. Breakfast, registration, etc. until 9:30 a.m. The ride to Castaic Lake begins at 10 a.m. A Sammy Hagar concert, Tony Roma's barbecue, stunt show and trade show at Castaic Lake are available for those who wish to register. For additional information, call (818) 382-7995.



Deborah Robertson, Division Chief, External Affairs, presents Robert Sassaman, new District Director, with his photograph to add to the Wall of Directors in the executive offices.

Sassaman

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California (Civil), and is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Project Management Institute.

Congratulations to Bob Sassaman on his well-deserved appointment! Best wishes to him for many years of continued success and achievements as he leads District 7 into the next century. •

Disability

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IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty fourth."

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

We must remember that disability does not discriminate. Any one of us can become disabled, either temporarily or permanently, at any time. It is important to know what resources are available in the community to help guide a person through what is a very difficult and challenging time. It is also important to know how your employer can accommodate you so that you can perform the essential functions of your job. The Caltrans Disability Advisory Council, in an advisory capacity, actively seeks to address disability employment issues. If you would like to become more informed about the Disability Advisory Committee, or would like to become a member, please contact its Coordinator, Seyed (Amir) Torabzadeh, at 213-897-0085. •

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- | | |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nov. '99 | Partnering with Ventura County officials, Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), and cities of Ventura and Oxnard regarding impacts of two major improvement projects planned for the Ventura Freeway (101). |
| Nov. '99 | The Southern California Association of Governments is working with Congresswoman Juanita McDonald on plans to hold a Transportation Summit in the Los Angeles area this month. |
| Nov. 4 & 5 | Caltrans Director José Medina will visit District 7 |
| Nov. 16 | Senate Transportation Committee hearing regarding LA-710 Corridor at Long Beach City College. |
| Nov. 18 | Caltrans participating in the GAIN Program (Welfare to Work) 9 a.m. to 12 noon - 2959 Victoria Avenue, Rancho Dominguez |
| Nov. 27 | Angeles Crest Safety Task Force Meeting at 9 a.m.
Los Angeles County Fire Camp No. 2
4810 Oak Grove Drive, Pasadena |

What's Cookin' At Caltrans

HOLIDAY HODGEPODGE

NORMAN ROCKWELL PECAN PIE

A perfect holiday treat from the *Norman Rockwell Illustrated Cookbook*.

1- 9" or 11" unbaked pie crust
Five eggs
3/4 cup sugar
1-1/2 cups dark corn syrup
1-1/2 cups pecans, chopped or halved
3/4 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons vanilla
Whipped cream (optional)



Prepare pie shell; set aside. Beat eggs slightly in large bowl. Add sugar, syrup, pecans, salt and vanilla; mix until nicely blended. Pour into pie shell. Bake at 325 degrees for 50 minutes. When cool, garnish with whipped cream. Serve at once. Makes six to eight servings.

SWEET POTATO-APPLE BAKE

The two following recipes are from
"Favorite Recipes from the Ideals Family of Readers"

In a large saucepan, cover 6 sweet potatoes (yams) with water and boil until nearly done, approximately 10 minutes. Peel and cut into 1/2-inch slices; set aside. In a medium saucepan, cover 1-1/2 to 2 cups thinly sliced apples with water. Boil until nearly done, approximately ten minutes. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place alternate layers of apples and sweet potatoes in a greased 9-inch-square baking dish. Sprinkle each layer with 1/2 cup brown sugar, 1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon, 2 tablespoons seedless raisins, and 2 tablespoons chopped pecans. Dot with 1/4 cup butter and pour 1/2 cup water over the top. Bake 30 minutes. Makes six servings.

CRANBERRY SALAD

In a small bowl, drain two 8 -1/4 ounce cans crushed pineapple in heavy syrup, reserving juice; set aside. In a medium saucepan, heat 1/2 cup pineapple juice and 1/2 cup water over medium heat until hot; remove from heat. Dissolve well, two 3-ounce packages orange-flavored gelatin in juice mixture; set aside. In a small bowl, break up one 16-ounce can jellied cranberry sauce with a fork. Add to gelatin mixture while still warm; stir well. Add drained pineapple and 1 cup chopped walnuts; stir well. Pour mixture into 8-inch square, glass serving dish or favorite mold. Chill overnight. Makes six servings.

TURKEY POTPIE

A great way to use Thanksgiving turkey leftovers!
From *Mary Englebriet's book, Autumn*

In skillet, sauté one cup chopped onions in two tablespoons vegetable oil for three minutes; set aside. Then, melt two tablespoons butter in a heavy saucepan. Add three tablespoons flour and cook for a couple of minutes. Add 3/4 cup chicken broth and cook slowly, whisking to thicken. Cool slightly. Add 3/4 cup half-and-half. Add one cup chopped carrots, two cups chopped turkey, three cups cooked rice and the broth-cream mixture to onion mixture in skillet. Heat for three minutes. Season with one teaspoon curry powder, one-half teaspoon ground sage, and salt and pepper to taste. Pour into a deep-dish pie pan and top with pie crust (such as a store-bought Pillsbury crust, for example, or your favorite homemade pie crust). Cut slits in crust. Brush crust with a mixture of egg yolk beaten with one tablespoon cream or half-and-half. Bake at 375 degrees for 35 minutes. Serves four.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Please send articles or ideas for Inside 7 to Jeanne Bonfilio, Public Affairs, via e-mail by the 5th of each month to be considered for publication. All submissions are due to Graphic Arts for typesetting no later than the 15th of each month. For further information, please call 7-3630.

Attention to employees:

Each month, a recipe from our readers will be featured in the new *WHAT'S COOKIN' AT CALTRANS*. Send recipes you would like to share to Jeanne Bonfilio, via e-mail. A new recipe will be featured each month. The holidays are upon us. Do you have any traditional favorites?

Inside Seven

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